

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Homosexuality has become an often discussed issue on social media of late. Similar to other issues, homosexuality indeed identically leads to pros and cons. As a public secret, there are still many people that consider this issue a taboo matter. The fact shows that the existence of homosexual figures as part of heterosexuals seems to attract the curiosity of many parties. There is a plentiful open discussion in social media that directly invite homosexuals to share their stories and experiences in society regarding their actuality. With the development of the situation in society, there is a change in courage in the homosexual self. Quite different from the past, currently, homosexuals tend to be bold and overt in expressing their existence. This occurs due to the maturity and wisdom in thinking of society. Scientifically, homosexuality arises because of biological and psychological factors. It is covers something that emanates from their conscience to deviate from their natural physical form. On the other hand, there are also many homosexuals who do not have those aberrations but by reason of the environment and satisfaction solely.

In homosexual life, they are categorized into two types, namely gay and lesbian. Gay was a term describing the attraction between men, meanwhile lesbian was a term that defines attraction sense between women. Lesbians generally prefer to shut themselves up tightly. However, over time, they dare to show up their true identity towards society. Correlated with the previous statement, Ann Ferguson cited by Lasasti, (2011), affirms that a lesbian is a woman who has emotional ties and who sees herself as part of a lesbian community. Other than that, they have a bond either emotionally or sexually attracted to women. Moreover, Maramis (2009) determine lesbian behavior as a condition in which a person exhibits sexual behavior among people of same-sex, in this case among women. If a person has repeatedly shown this behavior it indicates that lesbianism has formed, although thus not considered as a first choice.

In today's era, this issue has begun to develop in literary circles. There are plentiful numbers of writers who no longer hesitate to express their ideas by raising the theme of lesbianism in their works. Lesbianism itself is some understanding and practice of the persistent life propagated by liberals in various parts of the world. Cited from Wikipedia, this understanding describes the sexual orientation and desire between women (*Novel - Wikipedia*, n.d.). In this perception women who catch a feeling of other women (romantically) are termed lesbian. Lesbian characters commenced appearing in fictional literary works. The theme of lesbianism also enlivens the pages of novels, from those that only side roles, to those of the main characters in the story. Novels grow to be one of the most prevalent forms of literary work. This form was widely circulated in society due to its extensive communication power. Cited from Sumardjo (1981) the term novel defines as an extended narrative in literary prose. Likewise, he clarified that the long-form, in fact, refers to the story including the complex plot which covers interesting conflict, considerable characters, theme, and certain settings.

The Miseducation of Cameron Post novel is one of the novels that hold a lesbian theme in its character. This novel was the debut novel of Emily M. Danforth, an American author. In everyday life, Emilie is an Associate Professor of English at Rhode Island College who teaches creative writing and literature. This novel is recognized as a "best book" list in many bookstores and has been translated into 6 languages. In its sales, this novel received many positive reviews from readers. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel obtains flatter for its writing form and sense of place that describe by a review in the School Library Journal (*/ School Library Journal*, n.d.). In addition, in 2018 this novel was appointed to be a film by a well-known director, named Desiree Akhavan.

Through this novel, Emily examines the contradictions between sexual liberty and religious conservatism. It represents Cameron's exploration stage of sexual orientation and her circumstances during her time at a religious conversion camp, God's Promise. Cameron, the protagonist character, was a 12-year-old girl who described as possessing an affinity for her female friend. At the commencement, Cameron is portrayed as extremely restless when she finds an appeal with one of her girlfriends, Irene. Cameron became sad and relieved at the same time when she found out that her parents had passed

away. For Cameron, the death of her parents can be interpreted as a sense of security where Cameron's parents do not know that she has same-sex attractions. After being an orphan, Cameron lived with her grandmother and aunt Ruth, Cameron's only mother's sister.

Cameron's journey begins in the summer of 1989 at Miles City. After the death of her parents, Cameron tries to find new activities to distract her blues. She rented any VHS movies and did a makeover to her old room. Cameron no longer in touch with her best friend, Irene Klauson. Irene, for some reason, moves together with her parents to a boarding school. Under her aunt's direction, Cameron was invited to go to a new church called Gates of Praise and join the youth group, Firepower. But it won't help at all. In the summer, she met a new friend on the swim team, Lindsey. They become close friends since that. Lindsey is a lesbian and she doesn't mind telling her experience to Cameron. Their relationship is just a casual relationship, but they do not hesitate to kiss each other. They stayed together until late summer before Lindsey finally returns to Seattle.

Cameron then met a new friend in a biology class, Coley Taylor. Cameron recognizes that she has a crush towards Coley, even though she knows that Coley already have a boyfriend, Brett. Since they were close, Cameron finally joined Coley and Brett through the prom. Here, she brought her best friend Jammie. During the prom, Jammie finally realizes that Cameron truly has a feeling for Coley. Jammie does not directly consider Cameron as a lesbian, he believes Cameron is just confused with her sexual orientation at the time. Cameron and Jamie begin dating after that, but Cameron is never interested in anything beyond kissing him. Like couples in general, there is the debate in their relationship which makes them decide to break up. Jammie was caught having a relationship with another woman and it made Cameron very angry. Since then Cameron turned to close with Coley. They kissed and related like lovers. Over the following summer, both of them got a summer job. Other than that Brett going to the soccer cam which makes both Cameron and Coley getting closer.

Coley finally revealed what they had done together which resulting aunt Ruth sends Cameron to God's Promise. In that place, everyone initiated to realize that what

they have been doing so far is sin. To put it simply, they were made to hate themselves for the sins they had committed. This made Cameron think that she must abandon her search for identity and do as she is told at Promise. But she met Jane and Adam. Through that friendship, she can hold on to some part of her identity.

Cameron experiences psychological problems where she was in the camp. One night, one of her friends purposely hurt himself because he felt the changes he got did not mean anything to his parents. By reason of this, an inspector from the state's Department of Child and Family Services comes to investigate God Promise which leads Cameron's frustration increasingly. She requires to articulate the emotional abuse that is occurring there: that the disciples are being taught to hate who they are so that they will change. At the end of the session, they were so tired of the way they were treated and it makes them decided to leave. "Ready to move on" (Danforth, 2013, p. 453). Cameron originates to recognize that her sexuality is not associated with whatever occurred to her parents and it is egotistical to believe so. Cameron eventually comes to terms with her true identity that she is comfortable and proud of.

The main conflict in this novel lays in Cameron's internal conflict to uncover her sexual orientation. Other than that, the external conflict involves when aunt Ruth sends her to a religious camp in order to cure her sexuality. Lydia (the principle in the camp) constant prying into and insulting of Cameron. The importance of both physical and social setting is composed clear and remains meaningful throughout the novel. Readers are presented with both implicit and explicit characterization of Cameron. This conflict and characterization were delivered through Cameron by using the first-person point of view, so it revolves around Cameron's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Since she is the narrator, she tells the reader certain things about herself.

Looking at previous phenomena that the researcher has been elaborate, the researcher is interested in discussing research on the theme of lesbianism that appears in the novel *The Miseducation Post of Cameron* which is reflected in Cameron Post character. The researcher chooses *The Miseducation Post of Cameron* as the object of analysis because the story considers to represent the life's struggles of a lesbian and how the environment responds to them. In fact there are several researcher that choose

lesbianism as the focus of the study but there is no researcher that discuss lesbianism aspect that specifically using the object of this study that is *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel. Through deep searching, it found that there is only one researcher that have raised the novel as research object. Here, the researcher wants to analyze the lesbianism which reflected in the novel by using feminist approach. Through the structural elements of the story finally the researcher therefore interested to conduct a study entitled: **“THE LESBIANISM REFLECTED IN *THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST* NOVEL (2012): A FEMINIST APPROACH”**

B. Problem Statement

The researcher develops 3 problems of the study which are dissected further into the following research questions.

1. What are the aspects of lesbianism in the behavior of the Cameron character?
2. Why does lesbianism emerge as an issue in this novel?
3. How is lesbianism depicted in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel?

C. Objective of the Study

1. To analyze the aspect of lesbianism in the behavior of the Cameron character by using Feminist Approach.
2. To reveal the reason why lesbianism emerges as an issue in this novel.
3. To describe how lesbianism depicted in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.

D. Significance of the Study

The researcher expects that this research will provide several benefits in the study of English. By the implementation of this research, the researcher believes there will be two benefits given in this research, namely:

1. Theoretical Benefit

By carrying this research, the researcher believes that it can be used as a reference by other researchers who want to investigate the lesbianism issue in the future.

Moreover, this research also expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in literary theory.

2. Practical Benefit

- a. This research will provide a clear explanation about aspects of lesbianism that induce a person to have same-sex attraction.
- b. This research will provide an explanation of lesbian life and how society sees them in everyday life.
- c. This research will give a piece of information about how it feels to live in a lesbian conservation camp.

E. Research organization

The research paper entitled “THE LESBIANISM REFLECTED IN *THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST* NOVEL (2012): A FEMINIST APPROACH” consist of five chapter. The research organization are presented below:

1. CHAPTER I is Introduction. In this chapter one contains about Background of the Study, Problem Statement, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, and Research organization.
2. CHAPTER II is Literature Review. In this chapter two contains about Underlying Theory, Previous Study, and Theoretical Framework.
3. CHAPTER III is Research Method. In this chapter three contains about Type of Study, Type of Data and Data Source, Object of the Study, Method of Collecting Data, and Technique of Analyzing Data, and Data Validity.
4. CHAPTER IV presents Finding, Discussion.
5. CHAPTER V presents Conclusion, Suggestion, And Pedagogical Implication